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ABSTRACT

These two documents are designed to assist governing bodies of England's further education (FE) and land-based colleges self-assess their performance and identify ways of improving their performance. Each document contains a "healthcheck" that requires approximately 30 minutes to complete and that was developed in response to informative feedback from 247 colleges regarding a previous questionnaire. Each document begins with a brief overview, glossary of key terms used in the questionnaire, and list of five resources. Each healthcheck contains 10 sections with questions designed to identify the following things: strengths and weaknesses within the board; the need for further briefing, development, or training of individual members; and deficiencies in the scope, adequacy, and relevance of information and support provided by the college. The items covered in the 10 sections are as follows: (1) governors' roles and responsibilities; (2) board efficiency and effectiveness; (3) strategy and mission; (4) relationships between the governing body, college, and other stakeholders; (5-9) fulfilling responsibilities and monitoring progress related to: curriculum and the learner, finance, human resources, estates and facilities management, and quality assurance; and (10) legal aspects. Although both questionnaires include identical section headings, each contains questions tailored to the specific type of college under discussion (FE or land-based college). (MN)

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ED 469 869

Governance + Health Check
Diagnosing Effective Governance for FE Colleges
[and]
Diagnosing Effective Governance for Land-Based Colleges

Learning and Skills Development Agency

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Office of Educational Research and Improvement
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GOVERNANCE HEALTH CHECK

diagnosing effective governance for FE colleges

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Introduction

It will take about 30 minutes to complete this healthcheck and for maximum benefit we encourage you to be as candid as possible. Where appropriate, please add additional comments, as these will serve as an invaluable source of topics for discussion in the facilitator-led debriefing sessions. This revised healthcheck was developed in response to the informative feedback from 247 colleges.

You can complete the healthcheck anonymously or include your personal details on the page at the end of the booklet.

A glossary and resource list is included to help you with your replies.

The healthcheck has 10 sections.

1 The roles and responsibilities of governors
2 Board efficiency and effectiveness
3 Strategy and mission
4 Relationships between the governing body, the college and other stakeholders
5 Fulfilling responsibilities and monitoring progress – curriculum and the learner
6 Fulfilling responsibilities and monitoring progress – finance
7 Fulfilling responsibilities and monitoring progress – human resources
8 Fulfilling responsibilities and monitoring progress – estates and facilities management
9 Fulfilling responsibilities and monitoring progress – quality assurance
10 Legal aspects

Most sections have three groups of questions. The first group aims to assess an individual's perception of the board's performance. The second group addresses the assessment of the contribution of individual governors. The third group asks for an individual governor's evaluation of the information, data and support provided to the board by the principal and senior managers.

Analysing the completed healthchecks will help to identify:

- strengths and weaknesses within the board
- the need for further briefing, development or training of individual members
- deficiencies in the scope, adequacy and relevance of information and support provided by the college.

College profile

In the event of a board of governors wishing to engage a facilitator or 'benchmark' the self-assessment against other similar colleges it will be necessary for the clerk to provide a brief profile of the college.

Name of college

Type of college *(please tick)*

General FE	☐
Tertiary	☐
Sixth form	☐
Voluntary controlled sixth form	☐
Land-based	☐
Art and design	☐
Other *(please specify)*	☐

Annual financial turnover (taken from most recent annual accounts to the nearest £0.5 million)

£

Membership of the governing body (excluding current vacancies)

Length of service	Number
Less than 1 year	
1–4 years	
5–8 years	
8+ years	
Total	

Glossary

Benchmarking
a term used for comparative analysis of either learner-related or financial data – thereby allowing comparisons with groups of similar colleges.

CoVE
Centre(s) of Vocational Excellence. Established in 2001 to develop, deliver and maintain high quality specialist provision across a range of new and traditional occupations.

For more details go to the LSC website (www.lsc.gov.uk) and click on:

1 'Documents'
2 'Circulars'
3 '02/15 Centres of Vocational Excellence'.

Centrality of the learner
the underlying ethos behind the inspection system. For details go to the Ofsted website (www.ofsted.gov.uk/public):

1 Click on 'A–Z of OFSTED publications since 1996'
2 Scroll down and click on 'Common Inspection Framework for Post-16 Education and Training'.

College student profile
refers to the composition of the student population.

Funding methodology
as currently used by the LSC.

Environmental sustainability
environment policy is the 'vehicle' for achieving sustainability, defined as 'the capacity for continuance into the long-term future'.

Facilities management
to encompass the provision of services within the college, eg catering, cleaning, etc.

Instrument and Articles of Government
produced by each college in accordance with the requirements of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 (section A1), and as modified with effect from 1 April 2001.

Performance targets
include specific performance indicators as set by the Funding Council as well as additional PIs set by the college.

Post-16 Standards Unit
an initiative identified in *Success for all* (page 25) and designed to enhance the teaching and learning focus from within the DfES.

Success for all
published by the DfES in June 2002.
A discussion document that proposes a number of reforms in raising quality and improving choice.

Available from the DfES website (www.dfes.gov.uk):

1 Click on 'Publications'
2 Click on 'Consultations'
3 Scroll down and click on *Success for all*
4 Under 'The Downloads' click on 'Download the Consultation in PDF Format'.

The college governor
published by FEFC in 2000. Available from the LSC website (www.lsc.gov.uk):

1 Click on 'Documents'
2 Click on 'Archived FEFC Publications and Inspection Reports'
3 Click 'here'
4 Scroll down to the 'Archive' tab at the top of the page to the bottom of the list and click on 'Other council publications not listed above'
5 Now click on 'Go' at the top of the page
6 Scroll down to '*The college governor*' and click on the red arrow to the right to download.

References below refer to *The college governor.*

Access to information – relate to proceedings of the governing body (section A3 para. 3).

Accommodation strategies – as required by the Funding Council (section C4).

Collaboration, partnerships, etc (section D1).

Disability statements – as prescribed in Disability discrimination action 1995 (section B2).

Employer responsibilities (section C9).

Financial regulations – as specified (section C6).

Nolan committee report – *Standards in public life* (section A1 para. 4.1).

Personal liabilities (section A1 para. 4.3).

Quality and standards – as required by the Funding Council (section C2).

Role of clerk – as specified (section A6).

Search committee – as defined in the Article (section A3 para. 5.4).

Resources

Benchmark standards for governors and clerks. Available from the LSC website at www.lsc.gov.uk (click on 'Documents' and then 'Other Documents').

Governance issues: raising student achievement. Available from the Learning and Skills Development Agency website at www.LSDA.org.uk

Governor training materials. LSDA, 2002.

Provider inspection reports for leadership and management. Available from the Ofsted (www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspect) and ALI (www.ali.gov.uk) websites.

The college governor. Available from the LSC website at www.lsc.gov.uk

1 The roles and responsibilities of governors

	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Don't know
The governing body:					
1.1 Has established an effective committee structure.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.2 Has an open and effective process for identifying and recruiting new governors.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.3 Has a successful approach to meeting the training and development needs of its members.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
	As a member of the governing body:					
1.4	I was given a full and informative induction to the college and my role as a governor.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.5	I am clear about the roles and responsibilities of the governing body.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.6	I am aware of and seek to abide by the seven principles of public life.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.7	I have the opportunity to question the recommendations made by corporation committees to reassure myself that I am fulfilling my responsibilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.8	I seek to identify gaps in my own knowledge and ensure that these are addressed.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.9	I participate in governor development and training activities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	The governing body is provided with:					
1.10	Well prepared and clearly prefaced papers in a standard format with adequate supporting information.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.11	All relevant papers at least 7 days in advance of meetings.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments

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2 Board efficiency and effectiveness

		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
	The governing body:					
2.1	Operates in a highly professional and business-like manner.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.2	Works within and accepts the principle of 'cabinet decision' with minority points of view being adequately addressed and minuted.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.3	Considers it receives full support and all the necessary information to fulfil its obligations from:					
	■ the clerk	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	■ senior managers.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.4	Has established appropriate performance indicators to target and measure its own effectiveness.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.5	Conducts a rigorous annual self-assessment of its own performance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.6	Ensures the implementation of all action plans following the annual self-assessment, provider reviews and other inspections.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	As a member of the governing body:					
2.7	I believe the board works well as a team.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.8	I have an effective working relationship with the chair.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.9	I have an opportunity to discuss my contribution and development needs with the chair or designated person, annually.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.10	I have confidence that the governors' collective skills and expertise will achieve ongoing improvement.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.11	I have confidence in the senior management of the college to implement policy and ensure continuous improvement.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments

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3 Strategy and mission

		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
	The governing body:					
3.1	Has a college mission statement, which reflects the core purpose of the college.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.2	Has developed a strategic vision for the future of the college in conjunction with the local LSC.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.3	Reviews the mission statement annually as part of the strategic planning process.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.4	Ensures that the strategic plan contains clear targets for the college and its senior managers.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.5	Has a systematic procedure for monitoring implementation of the strategic plan.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	As a member of the governing body:					
3.6	I understand my responsibility for determining and monitoring the mission, ethos, educational character and strategy of the college.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.7	I have confidence in my knowledge and awareness of the college's activities and services.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
The governing body is provided with:					
3.8 Evidence of local community and industry needs to support strategic proposals.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.9 Adequate information and data to inform the planning process, especially in terms of:					
■ college student profile	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ enrolment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ retention	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ achievement	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ benchmarking of college performance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ financial viability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ accommodation strategy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ human resource management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ quality assurance and raising standards	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ needs analysis	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ marketing strategy.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments

4 Relationships between the governing body, the college and other stakeholders

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
The governing body:					
4.1 Has a clear understanding of the respective roles of the board, the principal, clerk and senior management.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.2 Enjoys a climate of mutual trust and respect between the board and the principal.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.3 Ensures effective annual appraisal of the principal.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.4 Has established clear channels of communication with:					
■ staff	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ students.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.5 Is taking a pro-active view of the college's working relationship with the national and local LSC.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.6 Approves collaborative provision, including franchising, and receives progress reports.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.7 Has produced a role description for the clerk:					
■ which ensures independence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ and is subject to regular review.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.8 Ensures effective annual appraisal of the clerk.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.9 Facilitates openness and ensures that minutes and associated papers are available to those wanting access, with confidential items being kept to a minimum.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
As a member of the governing body:					
4.10 I am made aware of the outcome of the appraisal of the principal and clerk.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The governing body is provided with:					
4.11 Regular and updated evidence of the standing of the college in the local community and beyond.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments

5 Fulfilling responsibilities and monitoring progress – curriculum and the learner

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
The governing body:					
5.1 Is fully aware of the implications for the college of the 'centrality of the learner' agenda.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.2 In setting the educational character and strategy of the college, has given specific consideration to:					
■ widening participation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ inclusive learning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ government policy on raising standards	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ changes in the local and national economy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ developing local and regional partnerships	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ college status as a centre of vocational excellence.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.3 Has responded to the shift in emphasis towards the specific needs of the individual learner.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.4 Annually approves college targets and monitors performance in respect of:					
■ widening participation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ enrolment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ student retention	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ student achievements	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ student progression	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ equal opportunities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.5 Is aware of the system used by the college to assess and monitor the quality of teaching and learning.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.6 Has approved an appropriate action plan to address the identified weaknesses in respect of teaching and learning, paying particular regard to the role and contribution of the post-16 standards unit.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.7 Ensures the college implements a policy in respect of students with learning difficulties and disabilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.8 Ensures that the college curriculum strategy is appropriately supported by the accommodation and HR strategies.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
	As a member of the governing body:					
5.9	I understand the variety of learners and learning opportunities at the college, and can explain how these are relevant to the communities served by the college.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.10	I have a detailed awareness of least one academic / vocational discipline or department.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.11	I have confidence in my understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the college, with particular reference to performance targets.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	The governing body is provided with:					
5.12	At least annually – a report on the assessed standards of teaching within the college.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.13	Annually – a summary of course / programme reviews.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.14	Briefing from the college in respect of relevant national curriculum and learning opportunity initiatives.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.15	At least annually – benchmarking data on comparative student performance of other similar colleges.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments

6 Fulfilling responsibilities and monitoring progress – finance

		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
	The governing body:					
6.1	Has approved clear financial objectives, targets and performance indicators.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.2	Challenges the robustness of financial information and assumptions submitted by the college.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.3	Ensures that the annual estimates incorporate a robust sensitivity analysis and risk management plan for the college.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.4	Has approved the financial regulations for the college and ensures these are updated.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.5	Has been made aware of the implications of ongoing fundamental changes in funding methodology.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	As a member of the governing body:					
6.6	I understand the range and purpose of financial documents presented.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.7	I know the membership of the audit committee and am confident in its effectiveness, independent of senior management.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	The governing body is provided with:					
6.8	All necessary information for the approval of the college budget.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.9	Monthly / termly financial reports which have proved to be reliable, accurate and timely.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.10	Prompt reports of the financial implications arising from variation in planned performance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments

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7 Fulfilling responsibilities and monitoring progress – human resources

		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
	The governing body:					
7.1	Is fully aware of its legal responsibilities as the employer of staff.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.2	Has established clear, robust appointment and remuneration procedures relating to senior post-holders and the clerk.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.3	Makes a significant contribution to ensuring that an equal opportunities culture is embedded in the college.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.4	Is aware of and uses, when appropriate, external support for the recruitment of the principal and other senior post-holders	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.5	Is conversant with its legal responsibilities in respect of health and safety and ensures implementation of an active health and safety policy.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.6	Ensures there is an effective system of appraisal for staff.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.7	Has considered the level of resource allocated to continuing staff development.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.8	Encourages a climate of mutual respect between the board as employer and its employees.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.9	Considers the strategic contribution made by the human resource plan to the performance of the core business and its incorporation of the training and professional development priorities identified by the secretary of state in *Success for all*.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	As a member of the governing body:					
7.10	I am aware of ways in which the college actively seeks to remove barriers to opportunity and embraces diversity in pursuit of equal opportunities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.11	I am aware of the broad principles underpinning the contracts of the various groups of staff.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.12	I am aware of the trade unions and / or associations recognised by the governing body.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
The governing body is provided with:					
7.13 At least annually, reports on human resource management in the college which includes information on:					
■ staff profile	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ staff turnover	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ part-time / full-time ratios	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ staff absence records	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ IiP status.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.14 Adequate reports to ensure I meet my health and safety responsibilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments

8 Fulfilling responsibilities and monitoring progress – estates and facilities management

		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
	The governing body:					
8.1	Has approved an accommodation strategy which is realistic, achievable and consistent with all other elements of the strategic plan.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.2	Has a clear perception of the extent to which current estates provision meets the requirement for a high quality learning environment.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.3	Has ensured that all capital projects have been the subject of a feasibility study, including an evaluation of the range of options.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.4	Is well informed about the asset values of the college estate and opportunities for asset sales or property acquisitions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.5	Has ensured implementation of a realistic programme of property maintenance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.6	Has approved and monitors the implementation of an environmental policy.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.7	Has a clear policy for facilities management within the college, based on a feasibility study and ongoing review.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	As a member of the governing body:					
8.8	I consider the college is fully committed to the concept of environmental sustainability.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.9	I am satisfied with the level of property maintenance and the general appearance and state of the campus.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments

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9 Fulfilling responsibilities and monitoring progress – quality assurance

		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
	The governing body:					
9.1	Is aware of the targets and the minimum levels of performance set for the college by the LSC.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.2	Has approved and monitors the college policy for quality assurance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.3	Has established clear performance indicators as a basis for measuring standards and assessing levels of improvement.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.4	Receives, either directly or via the standards / quality committee, summary reports on levels of student and client satisfaction.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.5	Receives the annual college self-assessment report, and subjects it to robust critical analysis.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.6	Systematically monitors, either directly or via the standards / quality committee, the implementation of action plans resulting from college self-assessments.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.7	Has received, approved and made plans to monitor an appropriate action plan following each college inspection.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.8	Deploys sufficient resources, both physical and human, to ensure continuous improvement.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	As a member of the governing body:					
9.9	I feel part of a culture of continuous improvement and raising standards.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.10	I support formal events for recognising learner achievement.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	The governing body is provided with:	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
9.11	Meaningful information and data relating to:					
	■ examination performance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	■ all relevant performance indicators	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	■ national benchmarks and other comparative performance levels in the sector	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	■ student and other stakeholder surveys.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments

10 Legal aspects

		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
	The governing body:					
10.1	Is aware of the Instrument and Articles of Government and conducts itself accordingly.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10.2	Has appointed an audit committee which operates according to the Articles of government and the Audit Code of Practice.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10.3	Has ensured the implementation of:					
	■ the student charter	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	■ the college disability statement	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	■ a code of practice on public interest disclosure ('whistle blowing').	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10.4	Ensures the maintenance of a current register of members' interests available for inspection.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10.5	Receive all necessary information in respect of college companies, joint ventures and overseas operations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	As a member of the governing body:					
10.6	I am fully aware of my responsibilities in respect of disclosure of interest and always act accordingly.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	The governing body is provided with:					
10.7	Sound advice and valid reports from the college auditors.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10.8	Access through the clerk to legal advice.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments

General information

Name of college

Date questionnaire completed

Optional information

Governors may remain anonymous and all their responses will be kept in the strictest confidence. It may be considered to be of benefit, especially if using an outside facilitator, for governors to waive their anonymity and provide the following information.

Name

Categories of governor (staff, business etc)

Length of service

Member of college committees (F&GP etc)

Area of special interest

learning and skills development agency

GOVERNANCE HEALTH CHECK

diagnosing effective governance for land-based colleges

Ben Johnson Hill Associates Limited

27

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Introduction

It will take about 30 minutes to complete this healthcheck and for maximum benefit we encourage you to be as candid as possible. Where appropriate, please add additional comments, as these will serve as an invaluable source of topics for discussion in the facilitator-led debriefing sessions. This revised healthcheck was developed in response to the informative feedback from 247 colleges.

You can complete the healthcheck anonymously or include your personal details on the page at the end of the booklet.

A glossary and resource list is included to help you with your replies.

The healthcheck has 10 sections.

1 The roles and responsibilities of governors
2 Board efficiency and effectiveness
3 Strategy and mission
4 Relationships between the governing body, the college and other stakeholders
5 Fulfilling responsibilities and monitoring progress – curriculum and the learner
6 Fulfilling responsibilities and monitoring progress – finance
7 Fulfilling responsibilities and monitoring progress – human resources
8 Fulfilling responsibilities and monitoring progress – estates and facilities management
9 Fulfilling responsibilities and monitoring progress – quality assurance
10 Legal aspects

Most sections have three groups of questions. The first group aims to assess an individual's perception of the board's performance. The second group addresses the assessment of the contribution of individual governors. The third group asks for an individual governor's evaluation of the information, data and support provided to the board by the principal and senior managers.

Analysing the completed healthchecks will help to identify:

- strengths and weaknesses within the board
- the need for further briefing, development or training of individual members
- deficiencies in the scope, adequacy and relevance of information and support provided by the college.

College profile

In the event of a board of governors wishing to engage a facilitator or 'benchmark' the self-assessment against other similar colleges it will be necessary for the clerk to provide a brief profile of the college.

Name of college

Type of college *(please tick)*

General FE	☐
Tertiary	☐
Sixth form	☐
Voluntary controlled sixth form	☐
Land-based	☐
Art and design	☐
Other *(please specify)*	☐

Annual financial turnover (taken from most recent annual accounts to the nearest £0.5 million)

£

Membership of the governing body (excluding current vacancies)

Length of service	Number
Less than 1 year	
1–4 years	
5–8 years	
8+ years	
Total	

Glossary

Benchmarking
a term used for comparative analysis of either learner-related or financial data – thereby allowing comparisons with groups of similar colleges.

CoVE
Centre(s) of Vocational Excellence. Established in 2001 to develop, deliver and maintain high quality specialist provision across a range of new and traditional occupations.

For more details go to the LSC website (www.lsc.gov.uk) and click on:

1 'Documents'
2 'Circulars'
3 '02/15 Centres of Vocational Excellence'.

Centrality of the learner
the underlying ethos behind the inspection system. For details go to the Ofsted website (www.ofsted.gov.uk/public):

1 Click on 'A–Z of OFSTED publications since 1996'
2 Scroll down and click on 'Common Inspection Framework for Post-16 Education and Training'.

College student profile
refers to the composition of the student population.

Funding methodology
as currently used by the LSC.

Environmental sustainability
environment policy is the 'vehicle' for achieving sustainability, defined as 'the capacity for continuance into the long-term future'.

Facilities management
to encompass the provision of services within the college, eg catering, cleaning, etc.

Instrument and Articles of Government
produced by each college in accordance with the requirements of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 (section A1), and as modified with effect from 1 April 2001.

Performance targets
include specific performance indicators as set by the Funding Council as well as additional PIs set by the college.

Post-16 Standards Unit
an initiative identified in *Success for all* (page 25) and designed to enhance the teaching and learning focus from within the DfES.

Success for all
published by the DfES in June 2002.
A discussion document that proposes a number of reforms in raising quality and improving choice.

Available from the DfES website (www.dfes.gov.uk):

1 Click on 'Publications'
2 Click on 'Consultations'
3 Scroll down and click on *Success for all*
4 Under 'The Downloads' click on 'Download the Consultation in PDF Format'.

The college governor
published by FEFC in 2000. Available from the LSC website (www.lsc.gov.uk):

1 Click on 'Documents'
2 Click on 'Archived FEFC Publications and Inspection Reports'
3 Click 'here'
4 Scroll down to the 'Archive' tab at the top of the page to the bottom of the list and click on 'Other council publications not listed above'
5 Now click on 'Go' at the top of the page
6 Scroll down to '*The college governor*' and click on the red arrow to the right to download.

References below refer to *The college governor.*

Access to information – relate to proceedings of the governing body (section A3 para. 3).

Accommodation strategies – as required by the Funding Council (section C4).

Collaboration, partnerships, etc (section D1).

Disability statements – as prescribed in Disability discrimination action 1995 (section B2).

Employer responsibilities (section C9).

Financial regulations – as specified (section C6).

Nolan committee report – *Standards in public life* (section A1 para. 4.1).

Personal liabilities (section A1 para. 4.3).

Quality and standards – as required by the Funding Council (section C2).

Role of clerk – as specified (section A6).

Search committee – as defined in the Article (section A3 para. 5.4).

Resources

Benchmark standards for governors and clerks. Available from the LSC website at www.lsc.gov.uk (click on 'Documents' and then 'Other Documents').

Governance issues: raising student achievement. Available from the Learning and Skills Development Agency website at www.LSDA.org.uk

Governor training materials. LSDA, 2002.

Provider inspection reports for leadership and management. Available from the Ofsted (www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspect) and ALI (www.ali.gov.uk) websites.

The college governor. Available from the LSC website at www.lsc.gov.uk

1 The roles and responsibilities of governors

		Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Don't know
	The governing body:					
1.1	Has established an effective committee structure.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.2	Has an open and effective process for identifying and recruiting new governors.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.3	Has a successful approach to meeting the training and development needs of its members.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
	As a member of the governing body:					
1.4	I am clear about the roles and responsibilities of the governing body.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.5	I am aware of and seek to abide by the seven principles of public life.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.6	I have the opportunity to question the recommendations made by corporation committees to reassure myself that I am fulfilling my responsibilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.7	I participate in governor development and training activities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.8	I seek to identify gaps in my own knowledge and ensure that these are addressed.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	The governing body is provided with:					
1.9	A full and informative induction to the college and my role as a governor.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.10	Well prepared and clearly prefaced papers in a standard format, with adequate supporting information.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1.11	All relevant papers at least 7 days in advance of meetings.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments

2 Board efficiency and effectiveness

		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
	The governing body:					
2.1	Operates in a highly professional and business-like manner.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.2	Works within and accepts the principle of 'cabinet decision' with minority points of view being adequately addressed and minuted.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.3	Considers it receives full support and all the necessary information to fulfil its obligations from:					
	■ the clerk	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	■ senior managers.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.4	Has established appropriate performance indicators to target and measure its own effectiveness.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.5	Conducts a rigorous annual self-assessment of its own performance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.6	Ensures the implementation of all action plans following the annual self-assessment, provider reviews and other inspections.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	As a member of the governing body:					
2.7	I believe the board works well as a team.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.8	I have an effective working relationship with the chair.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.9	I have an opportunity to discuss my contribution and development needs with the chair or designated person annually.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.10	I have confidence that the governors' collective skills and expertise will achieve ongoing improvement.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.11	I have confidence in the senior management of the college to implement policy and ensure continuous improvement.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments

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3 Strategy and mission

		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
	The governing body:					
3.1	Has a college mission statement, which reflects the core purpose of the college in conjunction with the local LSC.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.2	Has developed a strategic vision for the future of the college.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.3	Reviews the mission annually as part of the strategic planning process.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.4	Ensures that the strategic plan contains clear targets for the college and its senior managers.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.5	Has a systematic procedure for monitoring implementation of the strategic plan.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.6	Has ensured the strategic plan provides an effective response to the fundamental changes taking place within the rural economy.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	As a member of the governing body:					
3.7	I understand my responsibility for determining and monitoring the mission, ethos, educational character and strategy of the college.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.8	I have confidence in my knowledge and awareness of the college's activities and services.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
The governing body is provided with:					
3.9 Evidence of local community and industry needs to support strategic proposals.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.10 Adequate information and data to inform the planning process especially in terms of:					
■ college student profile	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ enrolment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ retention	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ achievement	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ benchmarking of college performance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ financial viability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ accommodation strategy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ human resource management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ quality assurance and raising standards.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ needs analysis	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ marketing strategy.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments

4 Relationships between the governing body, the college and other stakeholders

		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
	The governing body:					
4.1	Has a clear understanding of the respective roles of the board, the principal, clerk and senior management.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.2	Enjoys a climate of mutual trust and respect between the board and the principal.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.3	Ensures effective annual appraisal of the principal.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.4	Has established clear channels of communication with:					
	■ staff	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	■ students.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.5	Is taking a pro-active view of the college's working relationship with the national and local LSC.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.6	Approves collaborative provision, including franchising, and receives progress reports.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.7	Has produced a role description for the clerk, which ensures independence and is subject to regular review.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.8	Ensures effective annual appraisal of the clerk.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.9	Facilitates openness and ensures that minutes and associated papers are available to those wanting access, with confidential items being kept to a minimum.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.10	Ensures the college has effective links with and receives advice from representatives of land-based industries.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.11	Ensures the college is seeking to meet the training needs of rural businesses through an emphasis on flexibility and access.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
As a member of the governing body:					
4.12 I am made aware of the outcome of the appraisal of the principal and clerk.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The governing body is provided with:					
4.13 Regular and updated evidence of the standing of the college in the local community and beyond.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments

5 Fulfilling responsibilities and monitoring progress – curriculum and the learner

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
The governing body:					
5.1 Is fully aware of the implications for the college of the 'centrality of the learner' agenda.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.2 In setting the educational character and strategy of the college, has given specific consideration to:					
■ widening participation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ inclusive learning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ government policy on raising standards	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ changes in the local and national economy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ developing local and regional partnerships	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ college status as a centre of vocational excellence.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.3 Has responded to the shift in emphasis towards the specific needs of the individual learner.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.4 Annually approves college targets and monitors performance in respect of:					
■ widening participation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ enrolment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ student retention	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ student achievements	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ student progression	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ equal opportunities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.5 Is aware of the system used by the college to assess and monitor the quality of teaching and learning.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.6 Has approved an appropriate action plan to address the identified weaknesses in respect of teaching and learning, paying particular regard to the role and contribution of the post-16 standards unit.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.7 Ensures the college implements a policy in respect of students with learning difficulties and disabilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.8 Ensures that the college curriculum strategy is appropriately supported by the accommodation and HR strategies.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
	As a member of the governing body:					
5.9	I understand the variety of learners and learning opportunities at the college, and can explain how these are relevant to the communities served by the college.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.10	I have a detailed awareness of least one academic / vocational discipline or department.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.11	I have confidence in my understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the college, with particular reference to performance targets.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	The governing body is provided with:					
5.12	At least annually – a report on the assessed standards of teaching within the college.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.13	Annually – a summary of course / programme reviews.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.14	Briefing from the college in respect of relevant national curriculum and learning opportunity initiatives.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.15	At least annually – benchmarking data on comparative student performance of other similar colleges.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments

6 Fulfilling responsibilities and monitoring progress – finance

		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
	The governing body:					
6.1	Has approved clear financial objectives, targets and performance indicators.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.2	Challenges the robustness of financial information and assumptions submitted by the college.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.3	Ensures that the annual estimates incorporate a robust sensitivity analysis and risk management plan for the college.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.4	Has approved the financial regulations for the college and ensures these are updated.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.5	Has been made aware of the implications of ongoing fundamental changes in funding methodology.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.6	Has a sound financial strategy for each of the commercial enterprises on the college estate, which is consistent with their use as a learning resource.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	As a member of the governing body:					
6.7	I understand the range and purpose of financial documents presented.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.8	I know the membership of the audit committee and am confident in its effectiveness, independent of senior management.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	The governing body is provided with:					
6.9	All necessary information for the approval of the college budget.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.10	Monthly / termly financial reports which have proved to be reliable, accurate and timely.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.11	Prompt reports of the financial implications arising from variation in planned performance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments

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7 Fulfilling responsibilities and monitoring progress – human resources

		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
	The governing body:					
7.1	Is fully aware of its legal responsibilities as the employer of staff.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.2	Has established clear, robust appointment and remuneration procedures relating to senior post-holders and the clerk.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.3	Makes a significant contribution to ensuring that an equal opportunities culture is embedded in the college	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.4	Is aware of and uses, when appropriate, external support for the recruitment of the principal and other senior post-holders	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.5	Is conversant with its legal responsibilities in respect of health and safety and ensures implementation of an active health and safety policy.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.6	Ensures there is an effective system of appraisal for staff.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.7	Has considered the level of resource allocated to continuing staff development.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.8	Encourages a climate of mutual respect between the board as employer and its employees.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.9	Considers the strategic contribution made by the human resource plan to the performance of the core business and its incorporation of the training and professional development priorities identified by the secretary of state in *Success for all*.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	As a member of the governing body:					
7.10	I am aware of ways in which the college actively seeks to remove barriers to opportunity and embraces diversity in pursuit of equal opportunities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.11	I am aware of the broad principles underpinning the contracts of the various groups of staff.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.12	I am aware of the trade unions and / or associations recognised by the governing body.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
The governing body is provided with:					
7.13 At least annually, reports on human resource management in the college which includes information on:					
■ staff profile	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ staff turnover	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ part-time / full-time ratios	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ staff absence records	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ IiP status.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.14 Adequate reports to ensure I meet my health and safety responsibilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments

8 Fulfilling responsibilities and monitoring progress – estates and facilities management

		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
	The governing body:					
8.1	Has approved an accommodation strategy which is realistic, achievable and consistent with all other elements of the strategic plan.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.2	Has a clear perception of the extent to which current estates provision meets the requirement for a high quality learning environment.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.3	Has ensured that all capital projects have been the subject of a feasibility study, including an evaluation of the range of options.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.4	Is well informed about the asset values of the college estate and opportunities for asset sales or property acquisitions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.5	Ensures the effective and viable use of the college land and estate as a learning resource.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.6	Has ensured implementation of a realistic programme of property maintenance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.7	Has approved and monitors the implementation of an environmental policy.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.8	Has a clear policy for facilities management within the college, based on a feasibility study and ongoing review.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	As a member of the governing body:					
8.9	I consider the college is fully committed to the concept of environmental sustainability.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.10	I am satisfied with the level of property maintenance and the general appearance and state of the campus.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments

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9 Fulfilling responsibilities and monitoring progress – quality assurance

		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
	The governing body:					
9.1	Is aware of the targets and the minimum levels of performance set for the college by the LSC.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.2	Has approved and monitors the college policy for quality assurance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.3	Has established clear performance indicators as a basis for measuring standards and assessing levels of improvement.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.4	Receives, either directly or via the standards / quality committee, summary reports on levels of student and client satisfaction.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.5	Receives the annual college self-assessment report, and subjects it to robust critical analysis.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.6	Systematically monitors, either directly or via the standards / quality committee, the implementation of action plans resulting from college self-assessments.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.7	Has received, approved and made plans to monitor an appropriate action plan following each college inspection.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.8	Deploys sufficient resources, both physical and human, to ensure continuous improvement.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.9	Ensures that good practice is consistently demonstrated in the management of college farms and estate.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	As a member of the governing body:					
9.10	I feel part of a culture of continuous improvement and raising standards.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.11	I support formal events for recognising learner achievement.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
The governing body is provided with:					
9.12 Meaningful information and data relating to:					
■ examination performance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ all relevant performance indicators	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ national benchmarks and other comparative performance levels in the sector	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
■ student and other stakeholder surveys.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments

10 Legal aspects

		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
	The governing body:					
10.1	Is aware of the Instrument and Articles of Government and conducts itself accordingly.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10.2	Has appointed an audit committee which operates according to the Articles of government and the Audit Code of Practice.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10.3	Has ensured the implementation of:					
	■ the student charter	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	■ the college disability statement	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	■ a code of practice on public interest disclosure ('whistle blowing').	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10.4	Is aware of the implications of the Care Standards Act on the management of residential students under the age of 18.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10.5	Ensures the maintenance of a current register of members' interests available for inspection.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10.6	Receive all necessary information in respect of college companies, joint ventures and overseas operations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	As a member of the governing body:					
10.7	I am fully aware of my responsibilities in respect of disclosure of interest and always act accordingly.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	The governing body is provided with:					
10.8	Sound advice and valid reports from the college auditors.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10.9	Access through the clerk to legal advice.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comments

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General information

Name of college

Date questionnaire completed

Optional information

Governors may remain anonymous and all their responses will be kept in the strictest confidence. It may be considered to be of benefit, especially if using an outside facilitator, for governors to waive their anonymity and provide the following information.

Name

Categories of governor (staff, business etc)

Length of service

Member of college committees (F&GP etc)

Area of special interest

48A

The *Governance healthcheck questionnaire* is designed to assist a college governing body self-assess its performance and identify ways to make improvements.

It has been developed by the Learning and Skills Development Agency in partnership with Ben Jonnson Hill Associates Limited (part of the Tribal Group).

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